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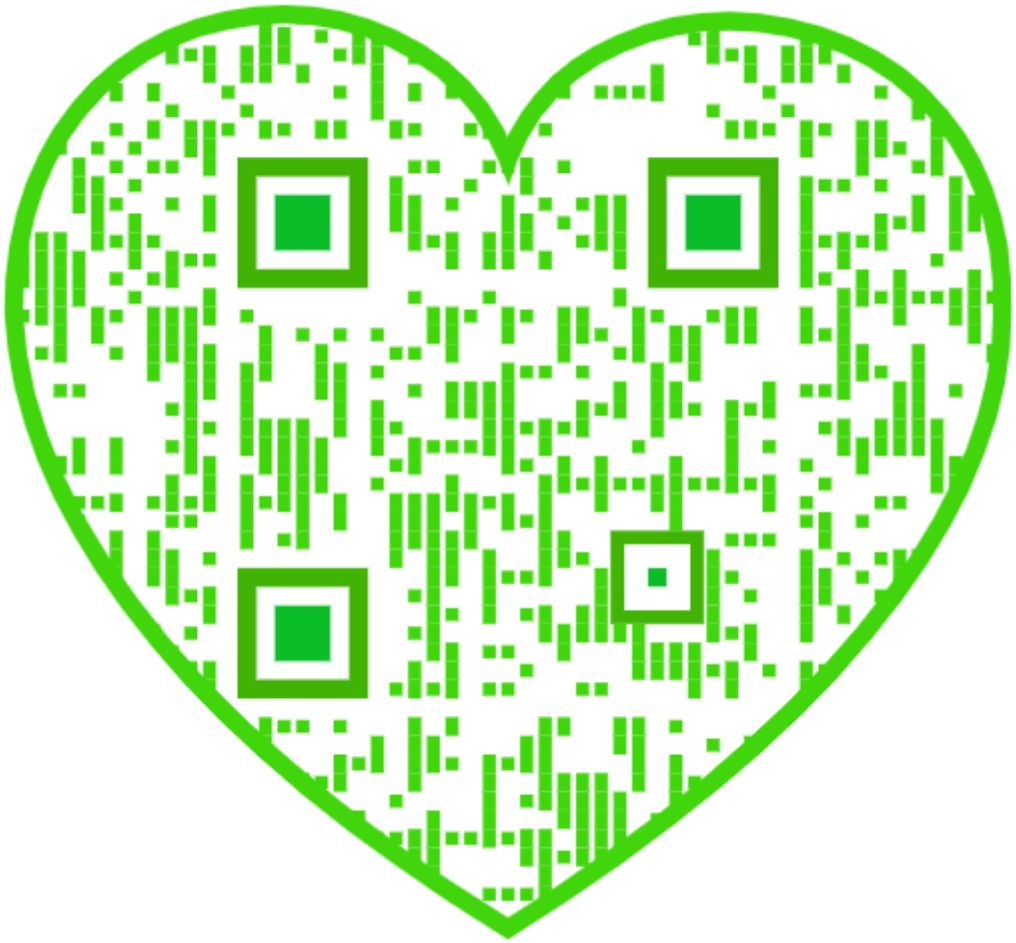
TRAPPING

BY WALTER L. ARNOLD



TRAPPING

BY WALTER L. ARNOLD

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A MESSAGE TO THE AMATEUR TRAPPER

Some men are born trappers, they are successful from the beginning. To some others success in trapping is a hard goal to reach, yet they stick to it and learn the "in's" and "out's" of the game and are finally rewarded with success. Some of the best trappers today are men that spent several years on the trap line, with the furs they secured scarcely paying for their board. And then there are those who never seem to be able to accomplish anything on the trap line, they never seem to be able to find the secret of successful trapping. They sometimes think that the reason the other fellow is so successful is because he uses some mighty, non-resisting scent that no furbearer can pass by. They are forever trying to obtain this secret and thus continue blindly working on shrouded in this senseless illusion.

Now the number of furbearing animals that you can induce to put their feet on the pans of your traps are not entirely ascertained by the kind of scent you use. Many successful trappers use no scent at all for "coon," mink, fisher, muskrat, skunk etc. However, I think a good scent is a help, and about the best scent in most cases is the musk of the kind of animal you are trapping. I do not class foxes in this list as I would not care to attempt to make a living trapping foxes without a good scent, but a good scent for foxes is easy to be obtained. I have listed four diffenent scents under fox trapping. Now any good trapper can use at least one out of the four with success in any part of the country. Here in this section of Maine where I am located, all four of these scents are good.

When you come to learn them the secrets of a successful trapper are very simple. However, the simple, yet vital, secrets are nearly always overlooked by the amateur trapper.

What I have found to be the most important requirements are: To be a willing worker, a lazy man will never make a success of trapping. To study the habits of the animals you are trapping, and to make all sets as free from new signs as possible, endeavoring to leave no trace of human scent.

Now what I mean by studying the habits of animals you are trapping or going to trap is, to study them in your own section, you can learn some things about them by reading, but in the different sections of the country the habits vary, and then again the habits of animals in your own section, vary. All the mink in your section are not the same any more than all the people in your section are the same. If any of the readers of this book are fur farmers they know as well as I that this statement is true.

If you are in doubt just how to commence to study the habits of the animals you want to trap, here is a plan.

When you see a track make a note of it, the date, place and what kind of a track it is. When you catch a mink, fox or any fur bearer note the bait used, place it was trapped, date, and if it was a land or water set. Keep your eyes open and anything that you notice that is of interest and make a note of it. After a while you will find you have learned that most of the mink that go up a certain stream will nearly always visit certain places. That the foxes have beats on the south side of certain hills, etc., etc. You will find this information very important in making sets.

Now I do not mean that you are to make a note of every track in the woods, such is not the case. You will find it will take but a few minutes every evening to

think of many of the tracks and other notes of interest you have observed during the day, and make a note of them. If you carry out this plan for a year or more you will find it the best investment of time you ever made. Now as to making sets and leaving them without new signs, I can not tell you how, that is something you have got to learn yourself. The longer you trap and keep your eyes open the easier it will be for you to make good sets.

When you are to make a set look around and see if you have picked out the best place. I have seen very poor mink sets made, where three feet from that place would be an ideal place all formed by nature. No trapper can tell you where to put your trap unless he is there with you. It is up to you to learn for yourself, if you are not successful the first time try again. Don't keep changing trapping grounds but stick to the same one, then when you have learned of a good place for a set you can use the next season and each season you will learn new places and your catch will increase. Do not try to specialize on one kind of animal. Keep an eye out for all kinds and learn to trap them.

Do not let yourself get careless about making sets and say "I guess that is good enough." Be sure before you leave it that it is good enough. Sometimes when your hands are cold and you find that the mice have eaten all the bait at a set, do not say "I'll bait it next time," but bait it right then and there. If you come to a set that is overflowed, caused by a sudden rise of water do not pass by without looking at it because you do not want to wet your feet. Get in and dig out the trap, you may save the best mink skin of the season by doing so.

The trapper's life is not the easy going, lazy sort of a life that some are inclined to think it is. Those who make a success of trapping are going to find that there is a lot of hardship and work mixed up in it and that

they have got to use their heads as well as their legs if they want success to knock at their door.

SPRING POLES

In making sets for fur bearers that are inclined to gnaw their feet off in the traps, it is a good plan to use spring poles. For the trappers that read this book and do not know about the spring pole I will give a few instructions.

For raccoon, fisher, etc., cut a pole 15 or 20 feet long the diameter of the top of pole, the end the trap ring is to be fastened to should be about 1 1-2 inches. A small spruce tree usually makes the best pole.

To fasten the pole into position, drive a spike through it about 9 feet from the end the trap ring is fastened to, if it be a 20 foot pole. Now place the pole against a tree 4 or 5 feet from the ground and drive the spike into the tree.

The trap ring should be securely nailed onto the end of the pole. At the entrance of the trap house drive down a stake, drive a small spike into the stake about one foot from the ground leave about 1 1-2 inches of the spike protruding from the stake, pull the top of the pole down and catch under the spike. When an animal gets into the trap it will soon release the pole in its struggles and the pole will raise the animal off the ground. After the pole has been fastened to a tree pull down the top end to see if the butt end is heavy enough to raise an animal off the ground, if it is not more weight can be added by lashing a block of wood to the butt end of the pole.

Care should be taken that there is not a tree near the trap house that the animal can reach after being raised off the ground by the spring pole. I have known of fisher and Coon winding the trap chain around a small tree several feet from the ground and gnawing themselves free.

If spikes are not available hay wire may be used to fasten the pole to a tree but it is not advisable to use strings as the squirrels are apt to cut them off. If the pole is fastened to a tall tree the wind will sway the tree and sometimes release the end of the spring pole at the trap house and the trap will be found hanging up with nothing in it.

Some trappers drive down a crotched stake and fasten the spring pole into it, that is a good method but care must be taken that the stake is securely driven into the ground.

TRAPPING FOXES

Foxes can be caught in runways. They follow the same paths you do and are not afraid of your tracks generally if there is no bait or scent around. You can make blind sets within eight or ten rods of old dead horses, etc., and get a few foxes this way but don't set too near the bait. Set traps out in a rain storm. Outside of the snare I think the water set is the best. The snare is more effective than a steel trap if handled right, some of the biggest catches of foxes I have known of being made were with snares.

For a water set cut a green hardwood stick about two feet long small enough so the ring of the trap will go over it. Fasten ring middle way of stick or clog. Many trappers use grapples; I used to and lost foxes with them. Sometimes a fox will make a few jumps and the grapple will hook into chain or trap, the fox will then go a mile or so before getting hung up. With a clog they are always near your set. Use No. 3 traps. You

need a pair of hip rubber boots, a mason's trowel or wooden paddle eight or nine inches long, a clean wooden box to keep your bait and scent in, also trowel or paddle when not in use. Go to a brook or the outlet of a spring, wade up to the spring or up the brook, find a dry, clean, low bank. With the trowel dig out or build up the bottom so that the traps will set just under water, six inches from shore. Lay the clog on the bottom about nine inches from trap and build up mound on it. Sometimes I find a rock with moss on it I lay on clog with top of rock out of water but don't have a rock very heavy, not over eight or ten pounds. If you don't use a rock use whatever there is on bottom, leaves or moss; have mound out of water. On this place bait and scent. Cover trap with leaves, wet ones so they will stay there. With trowel get a piece of moss about two inches square. Now here is a trick, place the moss on trencher of trap next to end of trap next to bait. If moss is near end of trap next to shore many times you will only find one or two of Mr. Fox's toes. The moss must be out of water so there will be a dry place for the fox to step. Jaws of trap must not be parallel with bank, if so they will throw the animal's foot out and not catch it. I think the fox is the most difficult of all animals to trap and the secret of trapping them consists of leaving your sets without any trace of human scent or any visible signs the fox will notice. Always scour blade of trowel in bottom of brook before making set, and touch nothing with your hands near the set, always use trowel for carrying leaves, moss, etc.

Now for bait and scents, clear skunk's musk is a mighty good scent. Rotten cat bait is good, also rotten fish; I prepare a scent for foxes, however, that I consider the best of anything I ever used, and have it for sale $1 per bottle, shipped by mail. When using rotten cat or fish use no other bait but use small birds, mice or fish with

skunk's musk or "Arnold's Fox Scent." Keep fresh scent at your sets, put on a few drops of scent every three or four days. You wonder which to use. Use what the other trappers are not using, foxes in a section will get wise to a certain scent, so use different kinds. To make cat bait kill and skin a cat, cut meat into small pieces one inch long and one-half inch wide and thick, put in running water a few hours to take away the scent of your hands and then put into glass jars and bury in the ground. This should be done in the spring or early summer and bait should be left buried until you need it in the fall. To keep from losing its strong odor which is apt to happen after taking jars from ground, keep the covers on very tight.

Another good scent is to put into a glass jar two field mice you have skinned out and cut into pieces, the musk glands of one skunk and the musk glands of several muskrat, bury this in the ground and let rot all summer or until you are ready to use it.

In making sets for foxes always leave your sets looking natural, learn to make a set quickly without a lot of unnecessary treading around, learn to make your sets look as if they belonged there, as if they were put there by nature. If you have never trapped foxes don't expect big catches the first year.

A LAND SET FOR FOXES

To make a dry land set for foxes either in the woods or fields, set trap on top of knoll or hassock, have a clog or grapple fastened to chain. Cover trap with whatever there is on the knoll. Do not make any new signs around trap, get the leaves, etc., that you cover trap with at a distance from trap. After you have made these sets, wait ten or twelve days before putting out bait or scent, unless there comes a rain that will kill all scent you have left at trap.

When you put out bait keep as far as possible from trap, throw bait into a hollow about twenty feet from trap. If you wish you can set two or three traps around one bait; however, do not set any nearer than twenty feet from bait. A fox coming up to a bait will try to see it from a distance and will go up on every little knoll and tread around trying to see the bait. He is not expecting a trap at a distance from bait and gets caught before he suspects one.

This set can be used in different ways. Traps can be set in small paths and bait thrown into brush piles and between rocks, etc. This set can also be made in winter; set out traps in a snowstorm, put tissue paper over them so they will not freeze up. Of course if too much snow falls it will block up trap but anything under six inches unless there is a crust. Throw out bait at time of making snow sets. I find the best places for these snow sets are rocks in streams and ponds that causes the ice to rise up in places and form knolls two or three feet high. Foxes are sure to go up on these places about every night whether there is bait there or not.

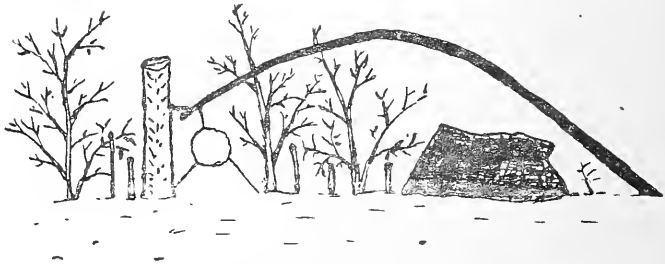
I generally boil my traps in hot water to kill all scent possible. Sometimes I use traps that I have left out for a year. If traps have been well boiled in hemlock and fir boughs with alder bark, they will not rust if left out for a year in a fairly dry place. They then smell of the woods and game is not afraid of them. Do not visit dry land sets too often. I let them go for a week sometimes. Try to visit them when it is wet or snowing.

For bait and scent use the same as described in water sets. Use strong traps, I advise nothing smaller than No. 3. In throwing out bait walk straight by traps, do not tread around, try and walk in same place when looking at traps.

SNARING THE FOX

To make a success of snaring foxes you have got to know something about foxes and know the places they are most apt to be found in your section. Look your ground over in the winter, you can tell by the tracks where they stay most.

Now one of the most important points is to get the right kind of wire. Get No. 24 SOFT BRASS wire and nothing else. Take a plank and drive two twenty-penny



Snare Set, Showing Spring Pole, Snare and Stay Sticks that Hold Snare in Place

spikes into it twenty inches apart, have one spike you can pull out with your hands. Fasten end of wire to one of these spikes, leave about 1 1-2 inches of end of wire free. Now run the wire to and around the other spike and back to starting point. Wind the wire around the spikes four times making eight strands in all, cut the wire off, leave an inch or so to wind around the eight strands next to spike also wind the other loose end around the eight strands next to spike. Now pull out the loose spike still keeping the wire on it. Now twist the wires by turning the spike; turning clear around sixteen or seventeen times will make it about right, sometimes it may need a little more. Now cut up some hay wire

about six inches long to fasten snare to spring pole. The sets should be made during the summer so all signs will be old by fall. Get into thickets as much as possible to make sets so they won't be so apt to be found by other hunters or trappers. Now you will have to use your own judgment as to the places to make sets. Sometimes you will find some big rocks with runways between them or you can set over an old log that you think a fox will walk the length of when he smells a bait. Sometimes at the edge of a hill there will be a steep ledge, at the bottom is a good place.

Your success in snaring will depend a lot on your judgment in picking out the best places to make sets. When you have decided on a place, if there is no path, clean out a narrow trail a foot wide, if you cut any bushes cut them next to ground and cover stump with leaves or moss. Now make a hedge out of dead limbs or brush, you don't have to use much. Have hedge run seven or eight feet each side of path into woods leaving opening in path about seven or eight inches wide. Plan to have the opening beside a tree so as to have a chance to set the spring pole. Now go out on the path anywhere from 15 to 30 feet and make another hedge the same as the first. Throw in some brush parallel to the path from the end of one hedge to the other, do this on both sides of path, dead evergreen trees are the best. Lay them down, they form a hedge yet do not look suspicious to a fox. Many times you can find places in old cuttings where the hedges are partly made. Making sets between two ledges or rocks you only have to hedge from one rock to the other. If you have to build all the hedge don't over do it. It does not take much brush to keep a fox out and in the path as long as there is no clean clear opening through the hedge; a dead fir or spruce tree laid down and a few fir or spruce limbs stuck into the ground in places will make quite a bit of hedge.

For a spring pole get a hard wood tree about two inches at the butt and 1¼ inches where it is cut off, ten or twelve feet long. Sharpen out the butt end and drive it slanting into the ground near hedge, small end over path and about five feet from the ground. It takes a few minutes to get it set just right so when you pull the small end down it is just about one-half inch away from tree it is to be set on. Most trappers fasten a spring pole by running the end of pole across trunk of tree and under nail driven into tree. In this case if animal gets into trap or snare and pulls the pole against the tree the pole will not be released and the animal will wind around the tree and gnaw out of trap or bite snare in two. To overcome this, don't let the pole reach the tree by one-half or three-fourths inches. Drive a ten penny nail into tree leaving two inches of it out, hew top side of end of pole so it will be flat, it will then stay under nail and will be released very easily either way the animal pulls. Now there is something to watch out for here; if spring pole is set to tall tree the wind swaying tree will release it so use small short trees or stumps for this purpose. Drive the nail into tree so that when spring pole is set it will be about thirteen inches above the path. Take snare wire, you have a loop in each end where spike was, put one end through loop in other end which makes the snare. Now take a piece of hay wire and put through the free loop and fasten snare to spring pole over path. The loop of snare should be 5 1-2 inches in diameter and bottom of snare 5 1-2 inches from the ground. Get two twigs about seven inches long as small as you can get them, split one end and stick them into the ground each side of snare, open up split ends and place snare in them, this holds snare in place. It is quite a trick to get both twigs set so they hold the snare and yet have snare in required position. Twigs want to be smooth and not

stuck in middle of path but to one side slanting in to snare. When preparing sets in summer or early fall get everything ready but do not put snares on to poles and it is well to leave poles sprung until about fifteen days before you want to bait up sets, then put the snares on and set poles.

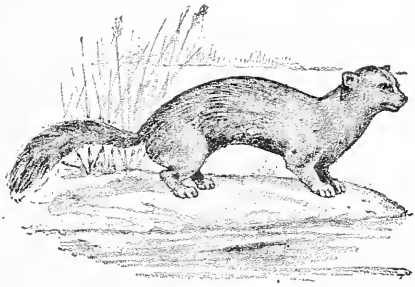
To bait sets walk along the outside of hedge and throw bait between two snares. Put fresh scent at the sets about every twelve days. Do not walk around the snares any more than you have to, when you look at sets and are not going to bait them go just near enough to see whether they are all right or not and then walk on and do not look at them much oftener than once a week. Sometimes there will be three or four paths leading into place where you want to bait. If so put out three or four snares.

A good set is this. If you kill a deer try and get it into a natural place for snare sets then dress off the deer and put out three or four snares from ten to twenty-five feet from the inwards of the deer with the least possible signs. Now to some this will not sound much like catching foxes but at least half a dozen times I have known of foxes taken the first night in that way. I know that many fox trappers laugh at the idea of snaring foxes. I used to, but after two of us caught 42 foxes in two falls, 39 of them with snares, I decided it was not as much of a joke as it might be.

Do not set a snare without a good stiff spring pole, you will lose every fox if you do. You will get many kinds of game in snares: skunks, raccoons, rabbits, hedgehogs, etc. I never knew of a wild cat being held in one. We have got them in snares but they always break away regardless of spring poles.

We are not allowed to snare in the state of Maine any longer so the steel trap is what we have to use, but I am in hopes that I can teach others that do have the

right to snare so they can benefit by the snare. Here are some points in favor of the snare; the rise and fall of water does not bother them like it does steel traps set in water; the snare does not freeze up about the time foxes are real prime, traps in water do; the snare sets are good even when there is six inches of snow and you can take 300 in your knap-sack and start out setting them up. You don't carry 300 foxes traps in your knap-sack and you can attend to a line of 300 snares as easy as you can attend to 30 fox traps in water. The fox is not on to the snare business yet but good many of them know what a steel trap is no matter where it is. Your snares are away from the bait, the fox gets into them before he knows it. Try them out and be convinced.



TRAPPING MINK

Unless set in runways where there is no bait or scent used all traps should be set under water. To make a set on a small brook find a narrow shallow place get some dry sticks or limbs, stake across the brook leaving an opening middle way about five or six inches wide. Set trap in opening under water. Put a fresh fish on the end of a stick and put over trap, about eight or nine inches above trap. Do not put stakes too near together, about three fourths of an inch apart so water will run through all right and not all of it through opening where trap is.

Another set is to take a fresh fish about one-fourth or one-half pound weight, run a piece of hay wire into its mouth and out of tail. Fasten the fish to the bottom of brook or stream, if it is possible let back fin or tail stick out of water just enough so mink will scent it. Set a trap each side of fish.

But many times you will want to make a set for mink where it is impossible to fasten a fish down. You have seen holes through the ice in streams, etc., where you know mink go in but you can't get a good set there. Well,

I have it after studying several years and it is simple, but it does get the mink. Get a piece of chicken wire about 18 inches square. Most wire is 20 gauge, get 16 or 17 gauge if you can as it is stronger and will not double up. Smoke this wire and traps with birch bark or boil them in hemlock and fir boughs with alder bark.

Do nnot use anything bright with this set. Fasten a fish about one-half pound weight middle of wire, fasten a trap each side of fish. Take a piece of hay wire six or eight feet long and fasten the two trap rings together with one end of any wire. You have a set now that you can drop into running water or any place you want to. You do not get your hands wet in zero weather and the set is good in three or four feet of water. Use the hay wire to fasten to shore or aything on the ice so the set will not be carried away with any animal in it.

In preparing sets along the banks of rivers and ponds for mink, use old logs etc., to make houses for traps. Many times you can find places under old logs or rocks all made to put traps into. I find that one of the most successful sets is to make a house out of rocks. You can easily set up a few rocks and make a house and yet there are no new signs to scare away a mink. Always make the house so that the trap can be set under water, fasten bait in back of house and after set is made splash water over it to kill all human scent. Sometimes it is advisable to make sets along the shores by not using any kind of a house, just stake a fish or muskrat down securely at the waters edge and set a trap in the water by the bait. If possible make this set by standing in the water and then after set is made splash water on it, every few days take away the stale bait and put a fresh one there and you will be surprised at the results obtained from a few of these sets.

I have good luck with mink setting in runways, under roots at the water's edge under shelving banks. Sometimes there will be a log across a brook in the water. Sometimes there will be grass or weeds on the old logs, make a little path if there is none over the log and set trap. There are many such places, don't be afraid to put a few traps in such places without bait or scent, you get the oldest and slyest mink this way. Sometimes bait or scent arouses the suspicion of the old sly mink. For traps use No. 1 or 2, the latter preferred, of jump traps of any make or No. 115x Triple Clutch traps. Cover traps when possible. Always cover out of water with grass, moss or leaves, but if smoked and blacked up it is not necessary under water.

As for bait and scent, I prefer fresh fish to any other bait, however, muskrats and rabbits are good bait. When a bait gets stale I take it out and put in a fresh one.

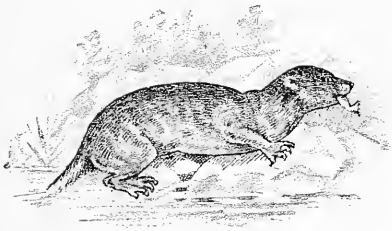
When you want to use scent, use mink's musk, trout oil, or "Arnold's Mink Scent." The musk glands of a mink are found at the vent, cut them out and put in a small bottle, mash them with a stick so as to get the musk out of the glands. If you can get the druggist to put in half an ounce of pure grain alcohol you will then have a first class scent, put all the musk glands of mink you get into this bottle, if you can not get the alcohol use the musk clear.

To make trout oil, cut up trout enough to fill a quart jar, screw cover on pretty tight and leave in a cool place where the sun will not reach it. This should be done in the spring then in the fall you can drain off the oil into a bottle, this amount should be sufficient for a trapper for one season.

I have trapped mink and raised them and have put in many hours to watch and study them. I find that there is a weakness that is characteristic in the mink family. A mink, no matter how shy it is, that once starts to

take a fish or any food that it wants, will, in a very short time, lose all sense of caution if the food is securely fastened so that the mink can not tear it away. In a few seconds the shyest mink will be spitting, tugging at the bait, jumping from side to side and sometimes rolling over and over trying to tear the bait free, this is when a well set trap makes a catch. Many trappers will doubt this statement, because, they have seen the tracks of mink where they have gone into a house and come out and gone on their way without getting into the trap or taking the bait. The reason for that, however, was because there was not the food in there that the mink wanted so there was no reason for the mink to get excited. If you make a study of mink you will find that ninety-nine times out of a hundred that a mink goes into a set and starts to take a fresh fish or bait, you will find the mink in your trap or the bait gone.

I know there are some mink you can not get into a house. Those are the ones to make the blind and water sets for and if you learn their runways it won't be long before you will have their pelt on a board. In making a mink set of any kind try and do so with the least possible signs, if you use a lot of green newly spotted sticks to make a house of, it only scares away the game and shows Johnny Sneakum where your traps are.



OTTER

These animals spend much time in the water along the streams and ponds. They are great travelers and always have a route through a chain of ponds and along streams that they travel over, making this circuit in, from one to three weeks. At some points they leave the water and go overland to another stream or pond.

At various points along their route they come out of the water to play. At most of these places they have what are called "Slides" or "Gourges." The location of a slide is selected where there is a bank by the water where the otter can slide down into the water. They slide in these places many times when they visit them, sometimes these slides are used for years and are worn deep into the ground.

Many times their paths will be found in marshy or boggy land, and as a rule they will visit springs near the streams or ponds.

Some of the signs of otter that will be observed are, the slides which are wore into the ground, around these slides will be found little piles of moss that have been dug up. The feces will also be in evidence. It is always soft and in it will be observed fish scales, etc. At the springs they visit will be found the little piles of moss and the feces.

A set made in an otters path in a marsh, if one can be found, is about the surest set made. A trap can usually be set under water in a puddle in the path and fastened to a bush drove down in the grass at one side of path. This set can be made quickly leaving no fresh signs and the dampness of the ground will soon take up all human scent. Sets made under water at the slides, where the otter slides into the water are those most frequently made by trappers. To an amateur this would appear to be a sure set for the otter, but after one has had the experience of trapping otter it will be learned that they are not easily trapped.

When they slide they slide on their breast and forward part of their front legs, their front legs are under them or against their sides. This is the reason that so many trappers find their traps sprung and with a few spears of hair in them. Their traps are set in the middle of the slide and it is the otter's breast that springs the trap. Traps should always be set so the pan is on the edge of trail or slide. An otter does not walk or run the way most animals do, it steps wide, its feet are on the sides of the trail. Sometimes their paths in the marshes will resemble the trail of a very narrow wagon, with wheels seven or eight inches apart.

To make a set at spring where there is no path or slide, set the trap in the water where you think the otter will go in, if this can not be done, set it where they play and dig up moss, cover the trap well with moss and try to fasten it without leaving signs of stake, etc. All traps for otter should be boiled in boughs to make them black and should be covered with moss, leaves, etc. when set. The otter has a very keen sense of sight, of scent and hearing, so utmost caution should be used in making sets to not disturb anything the animal will notice. It is a good plan to carry a dish along when making sets and it should be used after making sets to throw water over

all your works. Otter are easily frightened away from their slides, and once frightened, may not return again during the season. Never pass up a fresh otter trail in the woods that is far from the water, the animal can be overtaken and shot, many of them are killed in this way. I know of one case where a full grown otter was overtaken and killed with a club. An otter in a trap will do quite a bit of digging, but very little gnawing. They have very weak jaws and sometimes break them if they try to gnaw out of a trap. They are very strong animals, their legs and feet being very smooth they many times pull out of weak spring traps. They feed upon grass and lily roots, clams, fish, etc., but cannot as a rule be taken with baited sets. For traps the No. 415x is my choice, however, No. 3 and No. 4 of standard makes are used by most trappers.

SKUNKS

Skunks are trapped mainly around fields, pastures and in the woods near settlements. They are not shy of traps as a rule and are easily trapped.

Without doubt the best set is the den set. When dens are found that the skunks are using, scoop out the dirt making a bed for trap in the mouth of the den. Cover the trap with leaves, grass or fresh dirt. One is not always sure that a den is being used, to ascertain this, place a couple straws across the entrance. If they are found brushed away the next day the den is being used.

Skunks are pretty sure to be working on the carcass of any animal in the field or edge of woods. Sets can be made at the side of carcass or cubby houses built twenty or thirty feet from it and chicken heads, feathers, etc., put into it and trap set at entrance of house.

Around stone walls, fences, log piles etc., are good places for sets. Build a cubby house out of rocks or junks

of wood, bait with entrails and heads of chickens, dead hens, rabbits etc., a few feathers scattered around the set will sometimes arouse the curiosity of a skunk and cause it to get into the trap.

For scent use rotten meat of any kind. I think the meat from the carcass of one large muskrat with the musk glands of several muskrats put into a jar in the spring of the year and allowed to rot during the summer is about as good as any scent for skunks. For traps use No. 1 or No. 1½ of any standard make. There are many times that skunks will gnaw their feet off on the under side of jaws of trap and then pull their feet out of the trap. This can be prevented by using the No. 115x Triple Clutch traps.

TRAPPING MUSKRAT

The trapping of muskrat in marshes is much easier than trapping them along the banks of clear water streams and ponds.

In the marshes the feeding grounds, runways and houses are easy to locate and traps placed in these places and covered with grass, moss etc., are about the only sets needed. But along streams and ponds where there is little or no marsh land the foods they feed on such as grass roots, lily roots and clams are found under water. It takes considerable time and care to trap them in very large numbers. If the entrance of their dens can be located, traps may be placed in them with good results, however, most states prohibit the setting of traps at muskrat dens.

Set in places along the shores where they come out to eat, these places are recognized by the presence of clam shells, grass roots, etc.

Old logs that are in the water with rat droppings on them are fine places for sets. Cut a notch into logs to set traps in, under water if possible, and where it is evident that the rats climb up on to log. Do not disturb the

droppings and use no bait as one or more rats are probably coming up on the logs every night.

Where there are no logs to make sets on one can take a piece of plank a foot wide and three feet long, anchor it where the rats will notice it, set one or more traps on it and cover traps and plank with grass, also put a few pieces of apples or carrots on for bait.

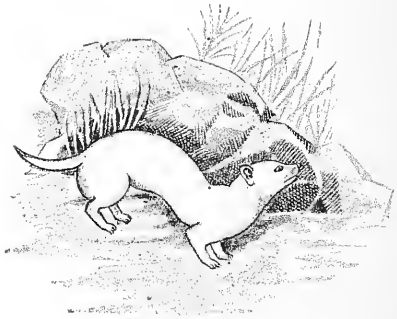
The carcass of a muskrat staked at the waters edge with trap set by it under water makes a good set for rats as well as mink.

Trapping rats under the ice is rather slow work. Sets may be made at entrance of dens if dens can be located, but this is not an easy task as generally river rats make their dens on the banks, the entrance being under water. A good set is to find the feeding ground, cut through the ice and make sets on chicken wire the same as described for mink, use carrots, parsnips and parts of muskrats for bait. For all sets that are made where the rats can not get into the water to drown, use the Two Trigger Traps. For other sets use No. 115x Tripple Clutch, or No. 91½ Victor traps. I have also used the Stop Thief trap in runway sets with success.

Always if possible stake traps with chain out in water so rats will soon drown as they will very often twist their feet off if allowed a chance to do so.

For scent use anise oil, Muskrat musk or "Arnold's Muskrat Scent." Do not use scent by runway sets or sets made near the rat droppings. Do not use new bright traps, color them dark in the same way as described in mink trapping. It is not necessary to cover traps under water but should be covered when set out of water.

The musk glands are found mostly on male rats in the spring of the year, not by the vent as is the case with most fur bearers, but on the body about an inch from vent. They are easily located and should be saved and put into a small clean bottle, they make the best of scent for most any fur bearing animal.



ERMINE OR WEASEL

Where the tracks of this little fur bearer are once seen around brush piles, old camps etc., are good places for sets as the weasel visits the same places over and over again. It may be three days or it may be three weeks but they are pretty sure to come back. They are not shy like most fur bearers, so are easy to trap.

The one secret of trapping them is to have the trap set so that the least touch on the pan will spring the trap. The smallest trap No. 0 should be used. They should be kept well oiled and the working parts free from rust so they will spring very easy.

Fresh meat is good bait, but there is nothing any better than a piece of fresh, bloody rabbit.

Make sets under brush piles, old logs, around old camps etc., fasten bait so it can not be dragged away, set trap side of it, do not cover the trap as that will only help to block it. Stand up boughs all around the set and against log or whatever set is made side of. No opening need be left as a weasel will scent the bait and dig in. The snow will not block a set that is well boughed in.

For scent put the musk obtained from weasels into a bottle with a little coon's, badger's or other animal grease. This will make as good a scent as can be bought anywhere.

I think that weasels vary in size more than any other fur bearer. I have trapped in one season a 11 inch and a 25 inch weasel. The ermine and weasel are the same animal. In the fur market the prime white skins are known as ermine, the brown as weasel.

RACCOONS

During the summer and early fall, coons are found around the shores of lakes, ponds and streams. But about the time that fur gets prime the coons disappear, this leads many trappers to believe that this animal is shy and hard to trap. I used to have this belief until I once had the occasion to trap in the summer when they were around the shores of the lake every night. In this state (Maine) several years ago the law came off from coon the 15th of August. I wanted some alive for breeding purposes so proceeded to set a few traps, I caught eleven in just a few days. They were the easiest things I ever trapped. I caught old ones as well as young.

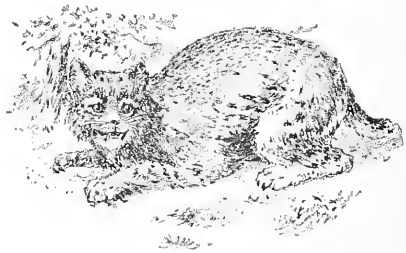
When the weather commences to get cold in the fall the coons stay closer to their dens, the traps set where signs were plenty during the summer will yield but a few pelts during the fall. If their dens can be located sets can be made in spring brooks and other places where they are apt to travel.

To make sets around the shores of ponds and streams, make a hedge with boughs and brush, from the water back towards the woods. Leave an opening in it eight inches wide, set trap in the opening and cover it with leaves, etc. Strew pieces of apples, fish, meat, etc., each side of hedge and through opening. Mink and fox sets are always good for coon. However, some coons will pull out of the small mink traps. Good sets can be made in a natural formed houses, such as hollow logs, stubs, under roots between rocks etc.

Fish seems to be their favorite food. They like meat of any kind but a porcupine cut open and hung up side of a tree makes about the best meat bait. Rotten fish makes a good scent and most any scent used for foxes is good. I have found by experimenting with coons in captivity that they are very fond of the smell of muskrat musk, however, this would not be strong enough to call them from a distance.

No weak spring traps should be used. Use No. 2 and No. 3 of standard makes. The 215x is a fine trap for this animal.

Traps should be securely fastened to clog or spring pole, a large coon will gnaw and tear up things equal to a small bear. They will soon foot themselves and escape if allowed the time to do so. Traps should either be visited every day or spring poles should be used that will hold the coons foot up so it can not gnaw and twist the foot off.



WILD CATS

The success of trapping these animals lies as much, in the making of sets where they will be found by these animals, as in any thing else.

Of all the animals I have ever trapped, I believe the wild cat is the coldest scented of them all. I think many trappers misunderstand the animal in this respect, and that is the reason that so many are inclined to believe, that the wild cat is shy and hard to get into a trap.

My experience with them has been that if they come face to face with a well made set, they are pretty sure to go in after the bait if they are hungry, if they are not hungry and leave it they are pretty sure to be back in a few days after it.

Those not accustomed to the habits of this animal may inquire as to where wild cats will be found. As near as I can judge it makes but little difference to the animal, what kind of a country it is in as long as there are plenty of rabbits and other game it can secure for food.

They will be found on the tops of heavy timbered mountains, in the swamps in low ground, and also, at the edge of the fields and almost at your door.

A friend of mine trapped three in one week at the edge of a field within half a mile of his home. However, as a rule they will be found around swamps where the rabbits are most plentiful.

The question arises among some hunters and trappers as to whether wild cats will kill deer or not. I will say that they may not in all sections of the country but they do in this state (Maine). I have known of them doing so several times. In one case I know of one wild cat killing two deer in one day, a doe and a fawn.

There are several ways of making sets. The wild cat has a habit in winter of walking in its old tracks, especially when it is near its den or a bait it is feeding on.

When there are reasons for believing that such a place has been found a good set can be made by going up to the tracks and slipping a trap wrapped up in tough tissue paper under one of them, a wooden clog three or four feet long should be fastened to chain. When going up to tracks try to do so where you can reach over an evergreen tree to make set.

Sets may also be made at a carcass that cats are feeding on. Set two or three traps around carcass and cover them with hair, leaves etc., that are around the carcass. Try to leave the place looking the same as before sets were made.

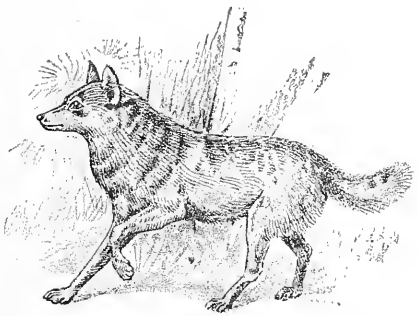
One, however, can not always find places to set in tracks or around baits that cats are feeding on. Regular sets must then be made.

If four trees can not be found in the right position drive down four stakes four feet apart, forming a square, fasten small poles across the tops and cover with boughs, fir, spruce, etc. Leave the sides open. This house should be about four feet high. With wire hang up a rabbit inside a couple of feet from the ground and set trap under it.

This is the set used by most trappers as they believe a cat will not go into a closed house, the same as made for fisher etc. I think that the reason that most cats are taken with this set is, because they notice it and see the bait more often than they do a closed house against a tree or rock. The above reason is a good argument against the common closed or cubby house, however, the cubby house has one advantage over the open house, that is, the snow will not be as apt to blow in and block the trap. In making sets where there is danger of snow blowing into them, I use the cubby house and I find that wild cats will go into them when they find them.

The best way to cause the cats to find the sets is to make a trail that they will follow, this can be done by obtaining a lot of fresh blood from some one who is killing some domestic animal, strew this blood along your trail between the traps, also shoot every rabbit you can. Cut them open and shake the blood out of them along the trail. Fill them up with snow and as it melts shake it out, then cut the rabbits up into pieces and leave along the trail. A cat that runs into one of these trails is not going to pass it up.

For traps use No. 3 and No. 4 of any standard make. I have found that the 415x triple Clutch bear trap is an ideal cat trap. They can not get out of it and a little snow will not keep the jaws from coming together allowing the cat to escape.



WOLVES AND COYOTES

There are two species of wolves in the United States, the Gray or Timber and the Prairie or Coyote. Probably 95 per cent are coyotes. The two species are being classed under one heading in this book.

The wolf like the fox is very cautious and is not easily led into a trap. The utmost care and caution must be taken to induce this sagacious animal to put its foot onto the pan of a trap.

The trapping season, baits and scents vary in different sections. In some southwestern sections the fur is not prime until into November, in some northern sections it is prime around the first of October.

In some sections domestic fowls are good for bait, in others they are worthless. However, jack rabbits and porcupines are nearly always good bait, and of course the carcass of a horse or other large animal. As a rule the Timber wolf prefers fresh meat and the coyotes are more fond of decayed meat.

Scents that are winners in some sections are worthless in others. Some of the scents used are the musk of muskrat, mink, skunk and beaver, also the musk glands of the wolf. Sometimes several of these scents are mixed together. It is advisable when using the musk of animal to put it into a bottle or jar with the oil of some animal such as badger, porcupine or bear oil. Badger or porcupine oil will be found the best as it will not harden as quickly in cold weather as other oils. Some trappers save the contents of the bladder from the wolves they trap and sprinkle it around some of their sets. It is up to the trapper to learn the best baits and scents for this section. A porcupine cut open and the quills singed off usually makes a good bait, also any wild fowls.

Preparations should be made early in the season for sets. If rocks are to be used for clogs they should be placed where the sets are to be made, hollows should be scooped out to set traps in, runways prepared and every thing done that can be done three weeks or a month before traps are set out.

If trapping is to be done on a range where there are domestic animals, the traps should be buried in the manure of such animals that use the range, traps should be left in this for two weeks or more. If trapping is to be done where there are no domestic animals then kill the scent by first boiling traps in clean water and then rubbing them with sage leaves or the boughs and leaves of any bushes or trees in that section. Do not use any oil on the traps it will only warn the wolf of danger.

Use No. 3 and No. 4 traps, especially the No. 4 for the timber wolf. Cover the traps with unused butter paper before placing sand leaves, grass, etc.. on them.

Blind sets are used extensively by successful trappers. These are made in trails on high points of ground and if in a dry section, near water holes. If sets are being made

near a water hole do not place traps nearer than 75 or 100 feet from such places.

Make several sets in places that the animals are apt to go when going to and coming from the water hole. It is well not to use any bait or scent near these sets.

In making sets near the carcass of an animal like a horse or steer it is best to place several traps around the carcass but at a distance from it, thirty or forty feet from the carcass. It takes an expert trapper to make a business of setting traps close to a carcass and catching wolves in them.

Sets can be made by placing bait in a bunch of bushes and setting several traps around and several feet from the bait. When setting traps around a bait always try to set where you think the wolf will travel when going to and coming from bait.

Like the fox the wolf is fond of getting up onto knolls and high points of ground to make observations, such places near a bait are always good places for sets as the wolf is not expecting danger at a distance from the bait.

The "Camp Fire" set is a good one, set the trap and cover the same as in making any set, but use sand or dirt so the covering will not be burned off the trap. Place a bunch of grass over the set and put a few small pieces of meat or cheese in the grass and set fire to the grass. This will scotch the bait and the scent of this will call a wolf from a distance. The fire will also kill the scent left when the set was made. Care must be taken to not over do this set. If a wood fire is made the trap is apt to get badly burned and warped out of shape.

In making sets the utmost caution must be observed. the place of set must be left in a natural looking state and free from human scent. That is the reason that it is important to have places prepared several weeks in advance for sets. One can then walk straight up to a place

and place the trap in the hollow scooped out, cover it up and walk on without leaving any new signs or scent. Clean gloves should be worn, these and also the soles of the shoes or rubbers worn should be rubbed with sage leaves, or the boughs or leaves of any bushes in that section. After a set is once made keep away from it, do not go nearer than absolutely necessary to look at it, if possible go on horse back. It is a good plan to go on horse back when making sets. Have a piece of canvas to lay on the ground to stand on when making sets. To smooth over a set use the wing of a duck or any fowl.

Bear in mind at all times that you are matching wits with an animal that is just as shrewd as the fox and to trap him you have got to outwit him.

It is useless to make pens or any other contrivance to force the wolf into, you simply can not force him into such places and the making of them will prove to be time wasted.

FISHER OR PAKAN

The Fisher or Pakan is the largest of the weasel family. The name fisher leads many to believe that it is an animal that is found near the water. This, however, is not the case. The fisher is found in the heavy timbered country in the mountains. It is a great traveler and never spends much time in one place. It generally has a circuit or route that usually takes the animal from one to two weeks to travel over.

Sometimes it visits the dense swamps, but as a rule the best places for sets are along the edge of hardwood growths, where it joins with the soft wood.

The most important thing to do is to locate the grounds the fisher travels, this can be located by the animal's tracks. There will be certain places in a fisher country where one will find that nearly every fisher will visit when in the country.

A fisher that has never been in a trap is not hard to catch but it is hard to hold. They will soon chew their feet and legs off and escape from most any trap smaller than a bear trap, if a spring pole is not used. A spring pole should be heavy enough to lift a fisher off the ground.

For bait, fresh meat of any kind is good, but porcupine is the best, muskrat, rabbits, partridges etc., are all good bait.

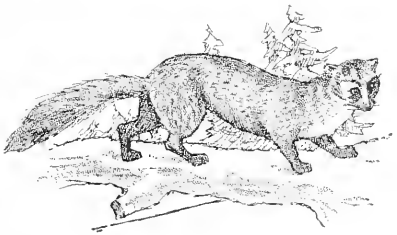
For scent use trout oil or a scent made by putting several muskrat musk glands, porcupine musk and two mice into a jar and bury in the ground for the summer.

In making sets sometimes a hollow stub or tree may be found that will do for a house but in most cases a cubby house has to be made against a tree or rock. Make walls by standing up dead junks of wood, cover top with a piece of birch bark to keep the rain from beating through onto the trap, cover over with boughs from fir, spruce etc. The house should be about ten inches wide, two feet long and a foot and a half high inside, should face the south to prevent snow from blowing in and blocking trap.

Use No. 2 or No. 3 traps of any standard make, and make sure that the ring of trap chain is securely fastened to end of the spring pole as a fisher is noted for the amount of gnawing and tearing up things in general it will do.

There are some trappers who obtain many fisher, yet do not trap for them. Such trappers or hunters make a business of following the animals when they find a fresh track. If a fresh trail is found in the morning it is a pretty safe bet that the hunter or trapper will have the pelt before dark. As a rule a fisher travels at night and goes into a hollow log or under roots to spend the day. After they have been followed in they are dug out, or if in a tree the tree is cut down and the animal is shot. Sometimes they get away and it may be a couple days before they are finally run in and killed.

A man that makes a business of following fisher is always equipped with a light ax, a blanket, rifle or shot gun and two or three days provisions. Some of the old three footed fishers that will not go near a trap are obtained in this way.



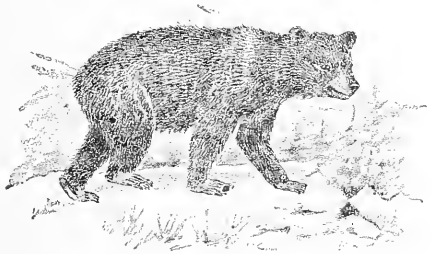
TRAPPING MARTEN

The marten has the habit characteristic in the weasel family, that is, where you have found signs of them once you are pretty sure to again within a few days or weeks.

One of the best winter sets is to drive two pegs into a tree about five inches apart and four or five feet above the snow. Set trap on pegs and hang bait on tree a foot or more above trap, do not cover trap but trap should be well blacked up by smoking or boiling in boughs. Lay a dead piece of wood or a pole three feet from base of tree to trunk of tree about eight inches below trap, and sprinkle fresh blood of some kind on snow and on pole up to the trap.

Good sets may also be made in hollow logs and stumps, or a house may be made for trap by tramping down the snow at the base of a tree and a house made of dry limbs and evergreen boughs, the inside of house should be six inches wide, one and one half feet long and eight inches high. Cover sides with plenty of boughs so snow cannot get in, put a piece of white birch bark over top if you can obtain it in your section of the country, and cover with boughs. This will keep the rain off the trap and it

will not freeze up. Have opening of house facing the south so west winds will not blow snow into the house and block trap. .Set the trap about six inches inside of house on boughs, cover with dry moss. Place bait in back of house. For bait use rabbits, fish, fresh meat, birds etc., also get some fresh blood when some one is butchering and use this to sprinkle around the trap. It is also good for trail scent, for not only marten but for fisher and wild cats. For traps use No. 115x and Triple Clutch, these are the best traps made for marten.



BEAR

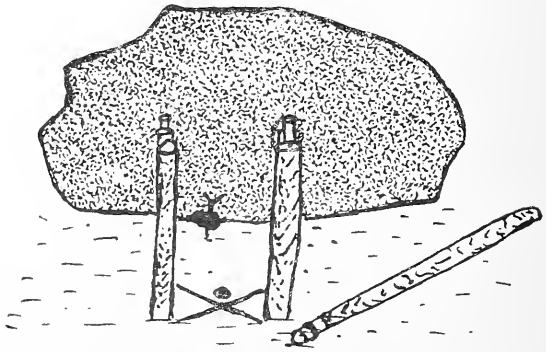
There are two seasons for trapping bear during the year, spring and fall trapping.

After remaining in its den all winter and awakening from its several months sleep a bear naturally thinks (if a bear does think) of its breakfast. They are then hungry and are easy to trap as they will smell and come to bait from a long distance. There are not the dead deer and other animals in the woods now that there are in the fall so bruin has to look elsewhere for most of his breakfast.

The diet of a bear in the spring of the year consists chiefly of bog onions and other roots, also beech nuts if any can be found left over from the past fall, fresh fish when they commence running up the brooks and what carrion that can be found that other animals have not eaten during the winter.

To make a set, cut up some junks about four feet long from dead logs etc., stand them up against a rock or tree making a house or "hut" about two and one half feet wide and five feet long inside. Place the bait in the back end of house, use meat of any kind, porcupine preferred, molasses, honey, fish etc. When baiting trap make a

small fire and scotch some of the bait, salt codfish is good to scotch, a bear will smell it from a long distance. Place trap in entrance of hut, do not set the trap so that the bear will have to step over one of the jaws of the trap, as the jaw when it snaps up may throw the bear's foot out of the trap. Jaws of the trap should be parallel with sides of hut. To cause the bear to place its foot on the pan of trap, cut two sticks about two feet long, drive them down each side of, and have them slanted across the



Set for Bear Showing Guide Sticks, Pan of Trap and Clog

entrance. They should cross at the middle of entrance about five inches from the ground. Pan of trap should be seven or eight inches back of this V and should be covered with moss. These sticks are called guide sticks and after a little experience with them a trapper can use them in making sets for most any furbearer. A bear trap should always be covered with leaves and a piece of moss about four inches square placed over the pan.

The making of a hut for bear traps to be set in is required by law in most states, but the most effective set is

not to make a hut, set the trap between two big trees that are about two feet apart, hang the bait on the trees and make no new signs. This set will get the sly old fellows that will not go into a hut.

Where one bear has been caught is, as a rule, a good place to catch more. There are always certain swamps and runways that bear travel in each year. After one of these places has been found it is a good plan to set traps there each year. There will be patches of bog onions that bear will work in each year. Find these places and have sets waiting for bruin when he comes to these places.

It is rather hard to get bear to take bait in the fall, they have had all the berries, nuts, meat etc., they have wanted and as a rule take no chances eating dinner where things look a bit suspicious.

A No. 5 Newhouse, is about the best all around trap for common black bear. Never try to fasten trap so bear cannot get away from hut with it. Use a clog. Cut a small hard wood tree about four inches at the butt, cut off a piece about six feet long and slip ring of trap over one end and fasten with small spikes about one foot from end of clog. A bear will drag this sometimes a mile but the trail they leave can easily be followed.

SKINNING, STRETCHING AND CARE OF SKINS

There are two methods of skinning fur bearing animals, "cased" and "open." The skins of most fur bearers should as a rule be cased, such animals are the mink, fisher, weasel, otter, fox, marten, muskrat, skunk, opossum, civit cat, ringtail, wolf or coyote and lynx. Wild cat raccoon and timber wolves are skinned by both methods, extra good skins of coons or wild cats that may be used as neck pieces should be cased. Bear, wolverine, mountain lion, badger and beaver skins should be open.

The cased skin is removed from the animal by the following method. If the feet are not going to be left on the skin, cut off the front feet above the toes, then using a sharp knife rip the skin of the hind legs from the feet to the vent, make the cut on the back of the legs but more on the inside. This will leave more heavy fur on the back of the skin and increase the value of the pelt. Cut the skin around the vent, and if the animal is a coon, skunk, otter or wolf, rip open the skin of the tail on the under side from vent to tip of tail, in fact, when the fur is wet and the weather is warm and muggy, it is a good plan to cut open the tail of any skin. Now with the thumb work the skin lose from the legs and around the hind parts. If the tail is split the skin may be removed by pulling on it and and using the knife to cut it free from places it sticks to.

If the skin of tail is not cut open, take a stick a foot long and split it half open push it on over the bone of the tail next to the body of the animal, grasp the stick in the right hand, with the tail between the first and second fingers. Place the left hand on the body of the animal and pull steadily upon the stick and the skin will be pulled off the bone of the tail. Now that the hind parts and tail are

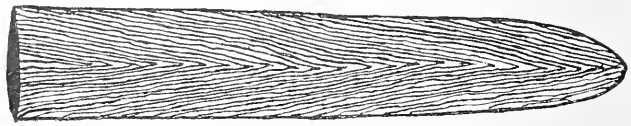
free hang animal up by the hind legs, with both hands pull and work the skin down, the skin is easily pulled off from some animals but there are some that it will take fifteen minutes. The knife is used to cut the ligaments holding the skin but care should be taken that the skin is not cut. After the skin is pulled down to the front legs work the fingers under them and pull them out. If the feet have not been cut off skin down to the toes and cut off in the joints, now pull the skin down to the ears and after they are located cut them off close to the head, the eyes will next hold the skin, cut the skin from around them not enlarging the apertures any, keep pulling down on the skin and cut it from the lips and finally cut the nose lose, leave the nose, ears, etc., on the skin. When the skin is cut lose from the nose it is fur side in and should be put on the stretching board in that condition.

The skin is removed from the animal "open" by the following method: Cut the skin of the hind legs and skin out the tail the same as in the cased method then rip the skin from the tip of the lower jaw to the vent, then starting on the inside of the front legs rip the skin from the feet to the breast between the two front legs and to the cut that runs from jaw to vent, the skin is then removed by pulling, cutting ligaments and working with the hands. A coon can be skinned out in a few minutes but it will take an hour or longer to skin a bear. Never get careless and cut holes in the pelt. A few cuts in a valuable skin will lessen its value many dollars. The skinning of the beaver is a little different, the skin of the legs is not cut open, the feet are cut off and a cut made from the point of the jaw to the vent and the pelt is skinned off over the body and legs.

The tails of beaver, muskrat and opossum are worthless and should be left on the carcass.

When removing a skin keep it as free from fat and meat as possible. Before it is stretched it should be thoroughly fleshed. To do this use a straight edge hunting knife and scrape off all fat and meat that has been left on the skin. A skin when being fleshed should be pulled on over a smooth board or the stretching board, scrape the skin from the head toward the tail. Do not flesh the skin where it lays on the edge of the board as it will cut very easy there, but keep turning the skin around on the board and scraping it with the knife where it lays against the smooth surface of the board.

Open skins can be fleshed after they are stretched and nailed upon the walls of the shed or wherever they are being stretched.



Type of Stretching Board Used for Cased skins

On the pelts of muskrats will be found a thin film of muscle that seems to be grown to the skin. Do not try to remove this as the chances are you will damage the skin more than you will benefit it. After the skin is thoroughly fleshed it is ready for the stretching board. The size of the board is very important, there is not one trapper in 20 that stretches his furs on the right sized boards. They get the skins too wide or too narrow, or sometimes put them on rudely made boards and damage the skins when trying to take them off after they are dry. Then they kick because they do not get full price for their furs. The trapper should bear in mind that the better shape the fur

is in the less work it is for the manufacturer to make it up and consequently more money will be paid the trapper for such furs.

The boards should be made of clear lumber, for the smaller size animals use one-half inch boards, plane them down so there will be a true taper from the base to the tip, the tip should be about one fourth inch thick, the edges of the board should be rounded and smooth. For the large size animals like the otter, fox, fisher etc, use three-fourth inch boards, work them down so the tip or nose will be one-half inch thick. Boards should always be smooth and have a true taper so the skins will slip off easy after being dried. To remove a skin from the board take the nails or tacks out, grasp the skin on the board below the legs, rap the tip or nose of stretcher with a block of wood if the board is the proper shape it will slide out of the skin. The size of animals vary in the different sections of the country so it is up to the trapper to decide the size of board to be used. However, for an example I will give the sizes of boards that are generally used in New England:

LARGE

	Length of board	Width at base	Width at shoulder
Mink	35 inches	4 inches	3½ inches
Coon	45 "	10 "	8 "
Muskrat	20 "	6½ "	6 "
Skunk	35 "	9 "	8 "
Otter	65 "	9½ "	7½ "
Marten	35 "	4½ "	4 "
Fisher	60 "	8 "	6½ "
Lynx	60 "	10½ "	9½ "
Weasel	26 "	2½ "	2 "

MEDIUM

	Length of board	Width at base	Width at shoulder
Mink	30 inches	3½ inches	3 inches
Coon	36 "	9 "	7 "
Muskrat	18 "	5½ "	5 "
Skunk	30 "	8 "	7 "
Otter	60 "	8½ "	6¾ "
Marten	35 "	4 "	3½ "
Fisher	60 "	7 "	5½ "
Lynx	60 "	9 "	8 "
Weasel	20 "	2 "	1½ "

SMALL

	Length of board	Width at base	Width at shoulder
Mink	28 inches	3 inches	2½ inches
Coon	34 "	8 "	7 "
Muskrat	16 "	5 "	4½ "
Skunk	30 "	6½ "	5½ "
Otter	55 "	8 "	5½ "
Marten	30 "	3½ "	3 "
Fisher	50 "	6 "	5 "
Lynx	50 "	8 "	7 "
Weasel	20 "	1¾ "	1¼ "

Figures given are inches.

SKINNING, ETC.

The skins of coons that are taken off open should be stretched as near square as possible. Beaver skins should be stretched round.

Wire stretchers are sometimes used but none should be used that can rust as they are very apt to rust the fur if the fur is wet when stretched and lessen the value of the skin.

The proper place to dry and keep fur is in a cool, dark airy room. If dried by artificial heat, the heat will take the life out of the fur, and sometimes damage the flesh side of the skin.

Light will fade the fur of most animals so it is advisable to keep all skins in as dark a place as possible.

The handling of fur after it has been taken by the trapper is one of the most important parts of the trapper's work. Many a No. 1 mink has been poorly handled and consequently sold for a medium, and many mink and otter slightly singed and curled has been dried by the fireside, the artificial heat singeing and curling the fur much more than it was when taken from the traps and many times leave the skin nearly worthless.

Many local fur buyers make a practice of soaking out in luke warm water many of the poorly handled skins they buy and stretching them over and getting them into a higher grade. Now there is no reason why the trapper should not observe a little caution and get that extra $5 for a fox skin instead of giving it to the buyer.

A professional trapper is a man that is on the job at all times and does not slight any of his work from the time he starts looking out his trapping lines in the fall until the last skin is sold in the spring.

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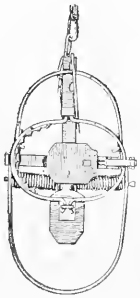

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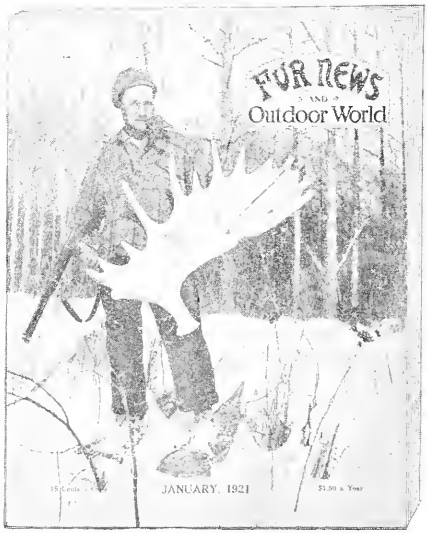

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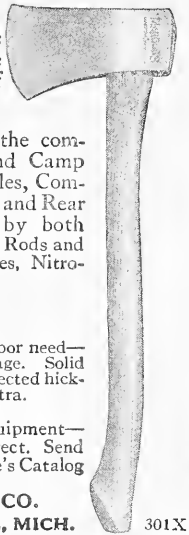

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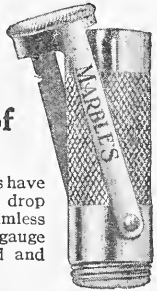

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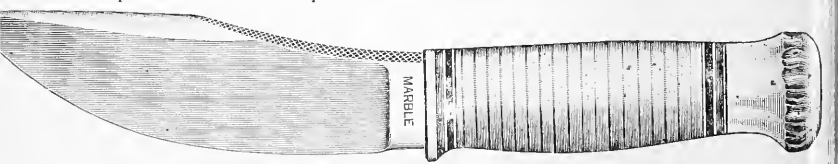

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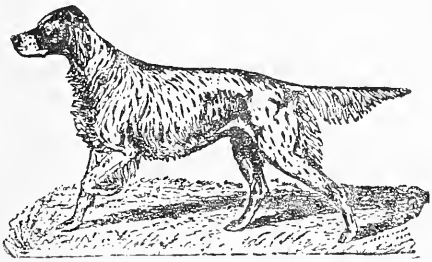

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